

CABLE, FRENCH ATLANTIC

February 17, 1937

I have received the following letter from C. L. Eckersley, but I do not think that it contains the correct information about the Office at Duxbury. It says, "that in view of the indeterminate period the Anglo and Western Union have occupied the Duxbury property, it has been decided not to proceed with the marking of it as suggested." As a matter of fact, the period in which the building was used as a Cable Office is very definitely determined. The French Cable was landed in Duxbury in 1869, and the building was almost immediately used for this Cable.

The date of taking over by the Western Union must be very definite, although, I cannot give that exactly.

This building was built over a hundred years ago, somewhere around 1830; the exact date can be determined. It was first used as a Bank Building; Duxbury's first and only Bank was lodged here. So, as outlined, it is an historic building.

It would seem to me particularly desirable that this historical building be suitably marked for Duxbury's Tercentenary.

If it be determined that the building should be marked, either a marker such as we are using for such other historical spots could be erected or a bronze tablet; whatever seems most appropriate.

Reuben Peterson, M.D.

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That evening, while Duxbury citizens were being entertained aboard the two vessels, the first message over the new cable announced a rise in ~~the~~ cable shares in Paris. On the following day, Mayor N. B. Shurtless and a group of aldermen and councilmen of Boston brought to Duxbury the felicitations of their city. The formal celebration of the completion of the cable took place on Abram's Hill on the following Tuesday, July twenty seventh. Boston assisted by having flags flown on her public buildings and by having a salute of one hundred guns fired on Boston Common. At two o'clock in the afternoon, festivities began in the great tent where tables for six hundred guests had been set. Flags of the United States, France and European nations added their color to the decorations. The band from Plymouth played. Outside, twenty-five men of the Second Massachusetts Light Battery, under Lieutenant C.W. Beal, lined up two field pieces to fire a salute when the cable finally should be pulled up to the tent.

Shortly before six o'clock after twelve hours of hard work under Clerk Gaines of the cable company, fifty hot, weary men finished their task of hauling the cable from the cable house over the marshes, across the channels and up to the banquet tent on Abram's Hill. As men crowded about to seize the rope for the final pull, Lieutenant Beal's detail fired the long-awaited salute. The sentiment felt by the entire assembly was summed up in the toast to which Sir James Anderson replied: (quote) "The French Atlantic Cable; uniting two continents, may it be, for all time, a medium of good will, and the promotor of an international peace as serene and undisturbed as that of the still ocean deeps through which it holds its course." (end quote)

Before closing this, the last of the series of talks given under the auspices of the Duxbury Tercentenary Committee, we wish to mention a few of the details and events which will mark the three hundredth birthday celebration of Historic Duxbury which begins tomorrow (Saturday) and continues until late evening next Monday. Those of you who visit the Tercentenary will have a splendid opportunity to contrast the life of today with the way our forefathers lived a hundred two hundred and three hundred years ago. In the Grand Parade on Monday, for example, there will be marching soldiers, airplanes overhead and automobiles in line, and in the same parade there will be ox carts, and floats dramatizing the early history of New England. So whether your tastes are early American or strictly modern, the Tercentenary Committee bids you welcome and promises you'll be able to find something about the celebration that you like.